



## Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN Geneva

### **National Statement, delivered by Ambassador Tahir Hussain Andrabi, Deputy Permanent Representative, during the Informal Conversation with the Coordination Committee on Special Procedures**

**11 December 2020**

Pakistan thanks the Coordination Committee for organizing today's informal session.

Pakistan acknowledges the valuable work done by mandate-holders and has always endeavored to engage with them constructively.

We take note of the briefing provided by CC on topics of today's discussions and would like to make the following points:

**First**, Full adherence to the principles of objectivity, transparency, impartiality and non-politicization remain essential. With this as the guiding framework, we see room to further improve working methods of the Special Procedures.

In certain cases, privileged communications between States and mandate-holders have been made public, including on social media well before the 60-days deadline, indicating a possible leakage.

The integrity of these communications must be ensured through robust oversight, in case, a willful breach, those responsible should be held to account.

Press Releases are also often issued at a very short notice of few hours, making it impossible to consult with capitals, seek and share feedback.

In terms of substance, some Press Releases contain unsubstantiated assertions, do not adequately reflect States' perspective, and at time, resort to legally imprecise terminologies.

Such instances are incompatible with the high standards of impartiality, objectivity and professionalism, expected of SPMHs. We call for improvements in this important area.

**Second**, we have taken note of the guidance notes issued by the Special Procedures on the COVID pandemic. States can benefit from them, keeping in view their national context, needs and priorities while advancing and safeguarding human rights.

**Third**, we share concerns about negative impact of the liquidity crisis on SPMHs' work. At the same time, we see it as an opportunity to preserve the integrity and independent status of the UN Special Procedures system by: (i) ensuring balanced resources allocation to all mandates on equal footing; and (ii) building necessary firewalls against distortions caused by donor-driven agenda or priorities.

**Fourth**, there is a need to enhance public visibility about the mechanics and functions of the Internal Advisory Procedure. Ways and means should be explored to make the Procedure more transparent, time-bound and streamlined. Given the increased footprint of social media



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platforms and related developments, the Code of Conduct and the Manual of Operations, which guide the Procedure, can be reviewed and updated.

**Fifth**, as ears and eyes of the Council, SPMHs should treat all human rights issues and situations on the basis of objective criteria, and in a non-selective manner. SPMHs' reaction should also correspond to gravity, recurrence and scale of human rights violations in a specific situation.

In this regard, we welcome SPMHs' close monitoring of and public expression of concerns over the human rights crisis in an occupied territory in our region.

These abuses have been well-documented, including by OHCHR and other independent observers. Even more worryingly, they continue to be grave, systemic and long-standing.

Unless these atrocities and willful violations of international human rights obligations are addressed, impunity will prevail, with high risks of this crisis turning into a human rights emergency. It is, therefore, paramount to continue objective reporting, monitoring and urging the country concerned to comply with international law by ceasing these grave violations of fundamental rights and freedoms.

**Finally**, in the context of points made by the SR Mr. Clement on verification and credibility, the SPMHs should remain cognizant of State-sponsored disinformation campaigns, as revealed recently by EU Disinfo Lab, targeting our country by propagating falsified human rights narrative.

The revelations of the EU Disinfo Lab necessitates that SPMHs insulate themselves from manufactured fake news and disinformation spread against Pakistan by one country in our neighborhood.

I thank you.